

**Summary of the discussions of the
Highly Migratory Species and
Billfish Advisory Panels Meeting**

**Silver Spring, MD
2-4 April 2001**

Highly Migratory Species Management Division
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Department of Commerce

October 2001

This document is a summary of the major discussions held at the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) and Billfish Advisory Panels (APs) meeting in April 2001. The major issues, topics, and potential alternatives for this meeting are outlined in Chapter 10 of the 2001 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report for Atlantic HMS (SAFE report). This chapter was the starting point for the discussions held at this meeting. Copies of the SAFE report are available online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html>. This summary document of the AP discussions does not endorse any viewpoint nor does it attempt to identify any consensus among AP members or any agency preference. Rather it serves to summarize some of the specific suggestions and comments that the staff of the HMS Management Division heard from AP members. For a complete transcript of this or any other AP meeting, please see the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/Advisorypanels.html>.

Table of Contents

HMS AP Attendees	ii
-------------------------------	----

Billfish AP Attendees	ix
------------------------------------	----

Meeting Agenda

<u>Monday April 2, 2001</u>	1
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1:00 p.m.	Opening Comments, Introductions, and Regulatory Update
3:00 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m.	HMS Recreational Fisheries
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn

<u>Tuesday, April 3, 2001</u>	3
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8:00 a.m.	Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quota Specifications and General Category Effort Controls
9:45 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	Implementing Extended HMS Vessel Logbook Reporting
12:00 noon	Lunch
1:15 p.m.	HMS Charter/Headboats and General Permitting
3:00 p.m.	Break
4:00 p.m.	National Standard #9 Compliance
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn

<u>Wednesday, April 4, 2001</u>	9
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8:00 a.m.	Longline Incidental Bluefin Tuna Catch Limits
9:45 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	Protected Species Update
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 p.m.	Other Topics
3:30 p.m.	Adjourn

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Summary of the Discussion held on Monday April 2, 2001

Monitoring HMS Recreational Fisheries:

Swordfish Fishery:

The discussion focused on the issue of increases in the recreational swordfish fishery related to concerns that areas closed to pelagic longline gear were open to recreational or handgear that use the same gear (hooks) as employed by fishermen who use longline gear. Part of the concern was the reallocation of catch to the different sectors of the fishery, especially to the charter-headboats which are allowed to sell their catch in some instances, even if that catch is taken from areas closed to longline gear. In addition, the issue of public safety was raised, where commercial vessels are required to have equipment to keep catch at safe temperatures, while charter-headboats do not have such equipment.

Additional AP member comments include:

- The objective of the regulations is to rebuild the swordfish stock. Representatives from all sectors commented that all sectors should contribute to that effort and the recreational fishery should not be permitted to expand.
- NMFS must continue to monitor quotas and compliance with International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' (ICCAT's) commitments.
- It is unacceptable to allow/foster growth of a new fishery and to land recreationally harvested swordfish for sale while fishermen who use pelagic longline gear are not allowed to fish in the closed area. All fishing for swordfish should be prohibited in the closed areas.
- Florida requires landings permits to sell catch, so there may not be as great a problem as perceived with the recreational sector selling its catch.
- Recreational representatives agreed that recreationally caught fish should not be sold, however there seems to be a conflict between having no bag limit and a prohibition on sale.
- Recreational representatives agreed that if pelagic longline fishermen couldn't fish in Marine Protected Areas, recreational fishermen should not either.
- There should be a recreational bag limit and, possibly, minimum size limits for swordfish. (Note that there is a 29" cleithrum to keel (CK) minimum length already in place for swordfish.)
- Some states in the Gulf of Mexico allow recreational sales, and just because longline fishermen and hook & line fishermen both use hooks, it does not mean that the recreational fishermen have the same bycatch problem as the longline fishermen. If states allow recreational sales, how can NMFS prohibit the sale.

Billfish Fishery:

There was significant discussion of how to implement ICCAT's recommendation limiting U.S.

landings of blue and white marlin to 250 fish. There was some discussion on the merits of the recommendation, and the causes of billfish mortality.

Some of the comments by AP members on monitoring and implementing the billfish ICCAT's recommendation are as follows:

- We should maintain the minimum size to control landings to control the numbers of fish landed. Use of a higher minimum size might not be best because larger spawners, which also need protection, would be targetted.
- Landings tags, similar to those used in the recreational fisheries for bluefin tuna in MD and NC, may work for monitoring billfish, but this type of program might be the most expensive.
- The bluefin call-in system really hasn't worked and we should learn from this. Tagging works better.
- We must be strict on counting the fish. Landing tags might work, but then it becomes an allocation issue. How do we distribute the tags? Lottery, auction, first-come first-serve?
- Funds from states, the Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, and the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistical Program could be used for paying for monitoring. Funds could be used for tagging programs, and/or to increase sampling for recreational surveys.

Summaries of the Discussions held on Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quota Specifications and General Category Effort Controls

Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) quota allocation percentages established in the HMS FMP govern the baseline allocation of quota provided by ICCAT (currently set at 1,387 metric tons). Individual allocations are then initially determined for each of the seven domestic quota categories including the General, Harpoon, Purse Seine, Angling, Longline, Trap, and Reserve. Each year adjustments are then made to this initial allocation based on either overharvest or underharvest from the previous year.

General category effort controls, which include time-period subquotas and restricted fishing days (RFDs), assist in achieving optimum yield. General category effort controls are intended to affect where and when BFT are caught, lengthen the season for market reasons, and are important for scientific data collection purposes. General category daily catch rates can vary widely, and have over the last several seasons. The General category effort controls that have been proposed for the 2001 fishing year are similar to those implemented for the 2000 fishing year.

The issues discussed by the AP included domestic BFT quota allocation, including overage/underage reallocation, and General category effort controls, including the RFD schedule. Comments from the AP regarding BFT quota allocation and effort controls included:

- The Harpoon Category quota should be increased, especially since the contentious issue of spotter aircraft should be behind us.
- A quota “roll-over cap” may be appropriate, but it should be more like 75-100 percent of a categories quota. If large roll-overs continue, then that categories allocation should be examined.
- Currently there are no incentives to conserve fish. NMFS must provide the opportunity to catch the quota, but catching the quota is not guaranteed. There should be some kind of limits on roll-overs, both in terms of the time frame for roll-overs and the amount of quota.
- RFDs are not needed in the General category as much as they were in the past. NMFS should consider eliminating, or at least reducing, the number of RFDs.
- North Carolina should be able to participate in the General category quota - perhaps through a separate set-aside quota, or the ability to participate in the NY Bight set-aside.
- We have percentage quota allocations for BFT - we shouldn't be revisiting this issue.
- Instead of looking at roll-over provisions, we should be looking at ways to allow the various categories to catch their quota.
- There may be a way to eliminate or modify the eight percent allowance for school BFT, if some kind of conservation equivalency could be developed through a slot limit or some other means. This is a sensitive issue at ICCAT, and something that should be dealt with by the ICCAT Advisory Committee.
- Aquaculture should be looked at for BFT. The issue is where the quota would come from, along with other habitat and protected resources concerns. The agency would need

to establish a policy and procedures to determine how the quota is tallied - fish in or fish out.

Implementing Extended HMS Vessel Logbook Reporting

Fishing vessel logbooks generally collect data on catch, effort, fishing vessels characteristics, and socio-economic information. These data can be used for a variety of purposes including stock assessments, quota monitoring, and regulatory impact assessments. Unfortunately, there is no dedicated HMS Logbook Program and reporting requirements vary between species and fishing gear types. The HMS Management Division currently relies upon logbooks from: the SEFSC Pelagic Longline Vessel, the SEFSC Reef/Shark, the NERO vessel trip reports and other Federal and State programs.

The AP discussion on HMS Logbooks was spirited and provided many insightful comments and suggestions. The AP gave overall sense that the agency needed to do more planning and preparation before embarking on an HMS logbook project and to coordinate fully its efforts with numerous external and internal partners. However, many members of the AP also provided operational suggestions for a program once it was implemented. Below is a summary of the general sub-topics raised.

Planning and Coordination:

- The purpose and need for the logbooks, and the data collected from them, needs to be clearly defined. The AP recognized that logbooks attempt to meet multiple objectives simultaneously which can be efficient but is also confusing. AP members asked:
 1. Science and stock assessments. What do the scientists need, do they find it helpful and has the Northeast Fisheries Science Center actually ever used the northeast Vessel Trip Report data?
 2. Management: What regulations and analyses have suffered within HMS fisheries due to lack of data? What data do we need to have, that we do not currently receive, versus what would like to have?
- New forms of electronic and web based systems can provide many value added products and advantages to fishermen such as real-time quota reports, fleet-wide trends, personal catch per unit effort (CPUE) and geographic information system (GIS) maps, real-time ex-vessel prices, etc.
- Effort should be spent up front to determine the timeline for implementation. Some comments were received urging not doing anything hastily and waiting and falling back versus going ahead immediately with something so that progress can be made.
- Financial constraints can dominate logbook programs not only internally but externally. Internally the money spent on a logbook program maybe better spent on other monitoring programs such as observers and costs for entering logbook data and maintaining data bases are high. There should be a cost/benefit analysis with other forms of data collection programs. Externally there are concerns about who pays for new forms of monitoring such as vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and whether this should be borne by the

government or the vessels. Filling out logbooks takes effort on the part of the vessel operator that could be spent elsewhere.

- Legal issues should be identified up front to ensure the data collected was sufficient to adequately support regulations and defend lawsuits. Also, a legal interpretation is necessary to define adequate attainment of “comparable monitoring” as required by the Atlantic Tunas Conservation Act (ATCA) between the recreational and commercial fleets.
- HMS efforts should be fully integrated with other ongoing initiatives to gain the input and support of technical advisors, both internally and externally, namely:

Internally:

1. NMFS Scientists: What data needs to be collected for stock assessments etc?
2. NMFS Statistical support: What is an appropriate methodology and statistical level for selecting vessels from HMS fishing sectors?
3. NMFS management: What are the data needs for regulatory analyses?
4. NMFS office of protected resources (PR): What data needs to be collected to adequately address PR bycatch?
5. NMFS Observers: What independent monitoring can be provided with logbooks?
6. NMFS Computer support: What databases need to be created, maintained, where?
7. NMFS northwest region has developed pilot electronic logbook prototype and may be able to help with the Atlantic pilot/prototype.

Externally:

1. ACCSP: Must coordinate with program and required data elements.
2. ICCAT: What are other Nations doing and what successes/failures can you learn?
3. Regional Councils: Many ongoing similar initiatives. Learn from experiences.
4. The Billfish Foundation has started electronic vessel monitoring program.
5. Longline/Charterboat/Angling/Harpoon individuals: are you willing to volunteer expertise?
6. HMS and Billfish AP: Coordinate with program once more developed.

Operational Design:

- A small prototype logbook program could start soon, with volunteer vessels throughout the HMS sectors and the agency providing the funds and equipment. The prototype would be very small and designed to test equipment and databases on a diverse variety of vessel platforms using different fishing gears.
- A pilot program for the logbooks could be expanded from the prototype program, use lessons learned and develop data to answer questions before expanding to a long-term program.
- Any such a long-term program would only start after the necessary coordination and planning had been completed, funding and cost sharing determined and selection criteria established.

HMS Charter/Headboats and General Permitting

Permitting for HMS has become more and more complex over the years as different permits or combinations of permits are required to use certain gear types or fish for certain species. Adding to the confusion are the differences in renewing permits and the new charter/headboat requirement. Topics for discussion included clarification of yellowfin tuna (YFT), swordfish, and shark recreational retention limits in light of the charter/headboat permit requirement, upgrading restrictions for limited access permits, and permit renewal expiration dates. The AP generally agreed that the process can be confusing, and that it should be streamlined. Some of their suggestions are listed below.

Charter/headboat requirements:

- There was general consensus among the AP members that defining a charter trip in a manner similar to that used in the SE regulations (based on paying passengers aboard and/or the number of person aboard, with 3 people or less on board constituting a “commercial” trip and more than 3 on board constituting a “charter” trip) would work for HMS, especially regarding the YFT bag limit issue.
- The definitions for charter and head boats need to be clarified since there are differences among the US Coast Guard, NMFS and Gulf States’ definitions. There was additional discussion about what permits are required for the boat and captain to be considered a charter vessel/trip.
- A vessel should decide if it is recreational or commercial and if it is recreational, it should use recreational limits.
- Several people mentioned concern about a loophole in the 3-fish YFT bag limit, where people use the general category rather than go on charters that are restricted by the 3-fish limit.

Types of permits:

- There should be just two permit types, one recreational and one commercial, each with appropriate endorsements available.
- NMFS should consider developing a single permit type, rather than three commercial permits to pelagic longline.
- Permits should be tied to the operator, not the vessel, so a vessel isn’t impacted when an operator acts illegally.
- Gear-based permits are acceptable, but a vessel must be allowed to use more than one gear.
- ACCSP is developing software that will prevent giving incorrect permit allowances by checking that applicants have both a USCG license and the minimum income attributed to fishing sales.

Upgrading restrictions:

- Several individuals stated that upgrade restrictions should be based solely on fish hold capacity, not length or horse power which could create safety issues for a vessel. Hold capacity should be on the vessels permit, along with a picture of the vessels profile.
- Everything that is caught should go in the hold and once the hold is full the trip should end so there is no discard.

Permit renewals:

- There should be a hardship review panel to determine if expired permits should be renewed after the one year from time of expiration renewal period.
- NMFS should use the term registration rather than permits, unless they are used to restrict or enforce a fishery.

National Standard #9 Compliance

Bycatch has been an ongoing concern in all HMS fisheries. AP suggestions to reduce bycatch and comply with National Standard 9 are listed below.

- There should be mandatory, not voluntary, use of de-hooker devices. Fishermen should continue to remove hooks versus just cutting lines.
 - The shark drift gillnet fishery should be banned because of the large bycatch attributed to this fishery. It was closed for 30 days in 2001 due to leatherback bycatch.
 - There is too little NMFS action on reducing shark bycatch. NMFS should support the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Shark Board and continue to participate in that process, in addition to encouraging further state actions to reduce bycatch of sharks.
 - Aside from the live bait prohibition, what actions have been taken to reduce billfish bycatch? (NMFS needs 6 months to get the results of the live bait prohibition, and impacts of the Charleston Bump closure won't be known until mid-2002. NMFS will continue to look at logbook data to determine if other alternatives exist. NMFS also wants to determine if there was effort redistribution after the closure, and what effect it had on bycatch. If billfish bycatch increased due to the time/area closures, we will reevaluate the measures.)
 - NMFS needs to establish specific/simple standards for evaluation of the effectiveness of any and all measures that are implemented to reduce bycatch. Even though NMFS is looking at multi-objective functions (e.g., reducing bycatch of billfish, turtles, marine mammals, etc.) NMFS should still be able to identify standard measures.
 - NMFS should be looking for billfish bycatch reduction methods that are exportable so the U.S. can address the Atlantic-wide bycatch problem.
-
- NMFS needs to conduct more research into post-release mortality for all gear types, from longline to and including recreational. An analysis, funded by The Billfish Foundation,

- indicates that about \$43M would be needed in order to obtain a “fair” sample size to estimate post-release mortality for sailfish.
- The State of Georgia has requested that the Billfish FMP be modified to allow more restrictive state regulations to supercede the current FMP regulations that go “to the beach”.

Summaries of the Discussions held on Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Longline Incidental Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Catch Limits

Much of the AP discussion focused on two different options brought to the AP by Bluewater Fisherman's Association (BWFA). Specifically the options suggested by BWFA were: (1) adjust the northern sub category from 2% of landed target catch to 10-12% of landed target catch OR 1 fish in order to reflect recent trends or (2) provide for the NMFS' Administrator to adjust the inseason- either subcategory or landing - requirements. Option one would allow a fishing vessel that brings in 4,000 lbs of target fish to land a 400 lb. BFT. During the discussion it was noted that the current 2% limit does not equate to 1 fish; this forces many vessels to discard a dead BFT. AP members considered adding a cap, such as 2 or 3 BFT per trip, to this option to ensure that the 10-12% doesn't allow for a directed BFT in the pelagic longline fishery especially regarding the larger Grand Banks vessels. Other AP members considered changing the option to one where 3,000 or 3,500 lbs of target catch has to be landed in order to land 1 BFT. A couple of AP members noted that setting this 3,000-3,500 lbs limit would allow large coastal shark fishermen, who have a 4,000 lb trip limit of large coastal sharks, to land BFT. Other AP members supported a 1 fish per trip limit, regardless of the amount of target catch landed.

Other AP comments included:

- Do not move the north/south line. But if you have to - move it south. If you move it north, it will be problematic because that is where the effort is.
- Because the Gulf of Mexico is a spawning area, the situation in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic differs and should be treated differently. In the north, the regulations are part of an allocation scheme; in the south the regulations are due to ICCAT recommendations.
- Most longline sets do not catch more than 2 BFT. Disaster sets that catch more are extremely rare.
- The BFT spawning stock is in trouble and the encounter rate, and thus mortality rate, with pelagic longline has not decreased in the Gulf of Mexico.
- If NMFS switches to 1 fish per vessel, it is likely that smaller vessels would start highgrading on BFT.
- This fishery is under a limited access program and ICCAT recommendations and rebuilding plan so it is unlikely that a directed fishery will develop.
- Any bycatch allowance based on weight is difficult to enforce. NMFS should use unit counts instead.
- Economics does not support the idea that fishermen would develop a directed fishery in order to target 1 fish.
- Why would pelagic longline fishermen be more likely than anyone else to highgrade?
- NMFS needs to define where spawning sites may be outside of the Gulf of Mexico.
- The only way to enforce catch limits is on the dock, not at sea.
- Define incidental catch as 12% of the directed target catch, up to a maximum of 3 BFT, with a minimum of 3,500 pounds of directed catch on board per fish.
- Define as above, but with a minimum of 3,000 pounds directed per fish.

- NMFS Enforcement staff stated that the threshold limit is not a problem as long as number of fish (BFT), which is more enforceable than percent by weight, is the measure.
- The main point is to ensure that there is a significant directed, non-BFT catch associated with any landed BFT to ensure trips aren't directed at BFT.
- NMFS must evaluate the impacts of any proposal to go to numbers of BFT vs. 2% of catch.
- Will this allowance result in high-grading of BFT that are kept for landing? Not in the pelagic longline fishery since vessels would not likely take the time and effort to sort through the hold to remove smaller BFT if they catch a larger one.
- Several individuals commented that few boats ever take more than 2 BFT anyway, only likely to happen on Grand Banks trips; 90% of vessels would take less than 2 BFT.
- There was discussion that in the best of worlds technology would be available to allow use of water temperature to define closed areas. Possibly this will happen at some point.

Protected Species Update

The discussion on protected species began with a presentation by Dr. William Hogarth who discussed recent events and outlined the reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) from the then-to-be-released draft Biological Opinion (BiOp). Dr. Hogarth explained that the RPA would include a closure to pelagic longlining in the Grand Banks, cooperative research in the Grand Banks to develop bycatch reduction measures, and gear modifications in the remainder of the pelagic longline fleet. The AP discussion centered around the process for releasing and reviewing the draft BiOp, the details of how the cooperative research would be conducted and if compensation would be available, the U.S. quota allocation at ICCAT, the role of the United States in developing international solutions to sea turtle bycatch, and the shark drift gillnet fishery.

Dr. Hogarth explained that the draft BiOp was expected to be released later that week with a 7-day comment period and that NMFS would then consider the comments in the final BiOp. Dr. Hogarth also stated that the agency was beginning a coast-wide consultation on all fisheries that interact with protected resources. Several AP members raised the concern that the comment period was short and overlapped with the ICCAT Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting. Dr. Hogarth indicated that NMFS would consider delaying the comment period to accommodate the IAC meeting participants.

Regarding the details of how the cooperative research would be conducted, Dr. Hogarth said that a research permit would be issued under Section 10 of the ESA, that compensation would be available, and that NMFS would try to accommodate all volunteers. AP members indicated that participation would depend on the details of the BiOp and research design and that vessel owners would have to decide for themselves if it was worth it to participate or whether they would reflag or fish elsewhere.

Considerable discussion on the U.S. quota allocation at ICCAT centered around whether the United States could lose its quota if U.S. fishermen could not catch it. AP members disagreed

whether it was possible for the United States to lose its quota. Some AP members stressed that in international fisheries bodies, the United States was the only part of the solution to reducing sea turtle bycatch and that if the United States eliminates its fishery, not only will lose its quota but turtles will not recover either.

Some comments on the shark drift gillnet fishery involved concerns that bycatch in this fishery was too high and that NMFS should consider eliminating this gear type. There was no discussion of these comments by the AP.

Other Topics

During this session a wide variety of issues were raised and discussed by AP members. The major topics and points raised by the AP members during these discussions follow:

Sharks:

- Few specific actions for shark management and conservation are identified in either the SAFE Report or the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA). The NPOA is a report, not a plan of action and both documents need to be significantly “beefed-up.”
- There are reasons to take action against shark finning besides the legislative mandate. For instance we should note the U.S. proposal for Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing of shark parts. Center for Marine Conservation can recommend how to improve data inadequacies.
- The Habitat section of the SAFE Report should provide a “risk averse” plan, not just summarize previous research.
- NMFS needs to work harder with ASMFC to get action on the shark FMP.
- NMFS should add deepwater sharks to the prohibited species list.
- NMFS needs better species-specific data for the stock assessment.
- Unidentified sharks can create a problem if they are attributed to the wrong quota (e.g., large vs small coastal).
- The Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware Bay, is a major nursery ground for dusky sharks.
- The shark drift gillnet fisherman generally have 0.5-1.5 hour soak times and can run the length of the net in about 15 minutes- to watch for bycatch. They are interested in a buy-out and would then be willing to fish strikenets.

State regulations/interactions:

- The FMP needs to clarify when Federal vs State regulations apply
- If state regulations are more restrictive, they should supercede federal regulations.

Evaluations of management actions:

- We need to monitor closed areas to be sure they are effective.
- We need good data to ensure right decisions are made.
- NMFS needs to find out what happened in the Charleston Bump area in February to see if a May extension of the closure is appropriate.

Limited Access Permits- Caribbean fishery issue:

- Concern was expressed that Caribbean fishermen did not have the same notice as fishermen along the coast when it came to applying and qualifying for limited access permits.
- AP members asked if this was truly a government-industry mis-connect, or if it was an avoidance issue.
- Options to re-open the limited access process would include just opening the process to Caribbean vessels or reopening the process to all vessels coastwide.
- There was, again, expression of sympathy for those individuals who may have been disadvantaged regarding limited access permits, but others felt there had been plenty of time for comments and applying and that to open the limited access permitting process again, even just for those USVI & PR vessels, would create a new round of loopholes and associated problems.

AP operating plans/issues:

1. Should there be Chairs for the meetings?
 - The AP has a lot of expertise but needs a strong Chair to ensure direction, guide discussion, and relieve staff pressures. If there is a chair it should be an AP member to maintain the identity of the AP.
 - Both a Chair and Co-Chair would be good
 - Reserve the option for chairs if needed for specific issues
 - The AP would benefit from a chair, but a non-industry representative would be best (academic-preferred since they have “no dog in the fight”).
 - One member suggested that an ICCAT Commissioner should be Chair, but several others disagreed, feeling that they would overshadow the AP.
 - Others felt that there should not be a chair, but there should be a strong moderator, from within NMFS, but not from HMS, or a facilitator to limit debate and prevent personal attacks.
 - Another member stated that there are 2 plans and 2 APs, there should be a chair and a vice chair/moderator for each panel. The AP member Chairs would ensure that NMFS doesn’t push its (policy) agenda.
2. How should the HMS and Billfish APs be made up?
 - A member suggested that the APs should be split, but there was more discussion to keep the APs together in order to increase the talent
 - It was suggested that another commercial seat be added if the meetings are

- held jointly, and possibly one from the USVI
 - A member suggested that ICCAT Commissioners be invited to the AP though several members stated that they should not be members of the AP, and another stated that ICCAT Commissioners should NOT be members and especially not chair.
 - Reappointment should be based, in part, on past attendance.
- 3. Should there be an Executive Committee?
 - The AP also discussed the idea of establishing an Executive Committee that would meet separately to determine issues to be presented to the entire AP. While several AP members thought that this may be a good idea and would likely increase efficiency, there was concern that it would also result in a loss of flow of the general meeting and in access to staff. It would also result in more meetings and the likely needed size of the committee (to ensure representation) may reduce its efficiency.
- 4. What should the meeting structure/process be?
 - Limit the number of times and/or topics each person can speak.
 - If there is a public hearing included in the meeting, the public must speak first.
 - There is a need to revise the Standard Operating Procedures to decide issue on voting (and voting members?). Some felt voting was a good idea while others stated that unless there is true consensus on an issue (which is VERY rare). NMFS benefits from getting input on the different viewpoints.
 - Several members stated that there should be breakout sessions - possibly by species or industry. However, this does create a problem for groups with too few seats to cover all concurrent sessions.
 - The meeting should be held just before IAC to save travel
 - NMFS needs to establish agenda based on what advice is needed, but AP members should have more input on where they feel NMFS needs advice.
 - NMFS Science Center and legal staff should be available for the duration of the meeting.
 - Several members expressed concern that special interest groups (spotter planes, Caribbean handliners) not be given special access to the AP. That these issues didn't directly relate to the AP- especially since there was no background information provided in advance of their presentations.
- 5. How should the AP be administered?
 - Members should NOT have to pay their own way, if they must, it could lead to un-equitable representation.
 - Members need to know sooner than 3 weeks before meeting so they can plan